

Memo

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To: Christene Carpenter Cleland, Chair, T&LPC

From: Rajiv Jhangiani, Vice Provost, Teaching and Learning
Giulia Forsythe, Director, Teaching and Learning
Matt Clare, Director, Technology Enabled Learning

Date: April 2, 2024

Subject: **Revisions to FHB Sections III: A. 9. (Examination) and III: A. 10. (Evaluation)**

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MOVED (/)

THAT The Teaching & Learning Policy Committee (T&LPC) recommend to Senate that the Faculty Handbook Sections III: A. 9. (Examination) and III: A. 10. (Evaluation) be revised as outlined in the attached appendices.

In support of the work plan of the T&LPC, the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation conducted a review of the language in the Undergraduate Academic Regulations section of the Faculty Handbook and consulted with relevant units or groups across the university to identify potential areas that require revision. Feedback was gathered from groups including the Office of the Registrar and Enrolment Services, Associate Deans, Student Accessibility Services, Experiential Education, the Student Ombuds, the Trauma-Informed Practices Advisory Group, and the Brock University Students' Union, among others.

A summary of potential revisions was presented to T&LPC members on February 13, 2024. With the support of T&LPC members, we drafted revisions to the relevant FHB language and subsequently shared this draft with the aforementioned groups as well as with faculty members across the university, via Associate Deans. The feedback received was incorporated in the revision of the draft language, which we are now bringing to T&LPC members for consideration.

In addition, at the direction of the members of T&LPC and in partnership with the Chair, T&LPC we also consulted with the Chair of the Governance Committee (March 1, 2024) as well as the members of the Undergraduate Student Affairs Committee (USAC; March 26, 2024). Members of USAC affirmed their support for continuing to share the responsibility for the enforcement of grading standards, as currently articulated in FHB Section III: A. 10.2.3. As a result, despite the apparent oddity of language drafted by and that falls under the purview of T&LPC being enforced by another Senate committee, this clause section of the FHB language has not been modified.

The following is a summary of the draft revisions, grouped by category:

- 1) Clarified the scope of the policy
 - a) Indicated that examinations are addressed by a different policy (FHB III: A. 9.)
 - b) The deadline for the reporting of final grades remains in the examination section (FHB III: A. 11.9.1.).
- 2) Clarified language
 - a) Clarified the language around the timing of various requirements to be communicated “at the beginning of each course” and consolidated all items into a single list. A format, such as a syllabus, was not assumed, nor was any precise timing.

- b) Clarified the respective roles of Deans, Chairs, USAC, departmental committees, etc.
 - c) Clarified guidance concerning evaluation information provided to students at the beginning of each course.
 - d) Consolidated the many references to deposition and reflect the examination retention policy.
 - i) Referred to the current [Course Information - Course Outlines & Curriculum Development retention schedule](#).
 - ii) Removed the reference to the Composition of Final Grade Form. Chairs and/or Deans may in turn choose to remove this obligation from instructors.
 - e) Clarified whether references to goals for a course refer to course learning outcomes and what is meant by “essential course requirements.”
- 3) Better aligned language
- a) Relocated policy language better suited to other sections of the Faculty Handbook to prevent repetition or reinterpretation, and general improve instructors' ability to identify what is expected of them.
 - b) The paragraph concerning admission standards and prerequisites in FHB III: A. 10.2.1. was removed (Leaving FHB III: A. 3.3.0. Admissions to speak to this).
 - c) Moved the following sections from FHB III: A. 9. (Examination) to FHB III: A. 10. (Evaluation):
 - i) FHB III: A. 10.5.1. (formerly 9.1.4.) Grade Report
 - ii) FHB III: A. 10.5.2. (formerly 9.3.5.) Final Grades for First-Term Half Credit Courses
 - iii) FHB III: A. 10.5.3. (formerly 9.5.3.) Aegrotat Standing
 - iv) FHB III: A. 10.5.4. (formerly 9.3.6.) Report to Faculty
 - v) FHB III: A. 10.6. (formerly 9.6.) CHALLENGES FOR CREDIT
 - vi) FHB III: A. 10.6.1. (formerly 9.6.1.) Purpose of The Challenge for Credit Process
 - vii) FHB III: A. 10.6.2. (formerly 9.6.2.) Intentions of The Challenge for Credit Process
 - viii) FHB III: A. 10.6.3. (formerly 9.6.3.) Procedures and Oversight of The Challenge for Credit Process
 - ix) FHB III: A. 10.6.4. (formerly 9.6.4.) How to Challenge for Credit
 - x) The moved sections were moved verbatim with the exceptions of:
 - (1) The addition of titles to FHB III: A. 10.6. (formerly 9.6.) CHALLENGES FOR CREDIT subsections
 - (2) The amendment of FHB III: A. 10.5.4. (formerly 9.3.6.) Report to Faculty to reflect digital transmission
 - d) Where relevant, language was better aligned with the academic plan
- 4) Improved language
- a) Revised the description of grading schemes (which currently includes phrases such as “a rare talent,” “craftsman-like,” “of a certain flair,” “incisive mind,” etc.)
 - b) Removed references to a specific vendor/software such as Turnitin (used the more generic descriptor of “phrase matching software”)
 - c) Used more precision (e.g., references to evaluation being conducted “fairly” vs. reliable and valid evaluation)
 - d) Standardized use of terms such as academic unit/department, etc.
 - e) Standardized capitalization of terms such as “academic integrity” and “academic misconduct”
 - f) Minimized waffly language and replace with clear and direct instruction (e.g., “Whenever and wherever reasonably possible”)
 - g) Used inclusive terminology where possible
 - h) Better reflected the format it is presented in (e.g., an instance of “above standards” was replaced with “grading standards”)

- 5) Update language to reflect current practice
 - a) Reflected university retention schedules
 - b) Reflected university practices around student accommodations and accessibility
 - c) Addressed independent studies courses and how these are treated differently (e.g., the expectation in many independent studies courses that students and instructors negotiate grade weights, etc.)
 - d) Added “Hold” and “Not Reported” to table of final grades
 - e) Removed the reference to the examination scheduled being published at the “start of term”
 - f) The BrockDB Final Grade Distribution Report, which currently provides Chairs and Deans and others with the course averages required to fulfill some of their duties, is being improved with direction from ORES to filter by “course code” and “course range” to make the report easier to reference.

- 6) Review the meaning of attendance given the expanded set of course delivery modes
 - a) Attendance expectations can be explained “at the beginning of each course” in the context of the existing requirement for attendance’s relationship to the course grade to be communicated

- 7) Added guidelines about variety of assessments and maximum percentages and the implications of late or missing submissions
 - a) References to what needed to be communicated to students were consolidated
 - b) A clause clarifying that a single item cannot count for more than 50 percent of the final grade was added
 - c) A clause clarifying the final grade shall reflect grades from no fewer than 3 assessments was added

- 8) Revised the section on phrase matching tools
 - a) Reviewed the set of reasonable alternatives that must be provided to students who object to participating in the use of phrase matching tools
 - b) Removed the term “offline” from this section
 - c) Updated the section to clarify multiple services instructors may consider submitting student work to, while underscoring the need to use university procured technologies that have gone through proper vetting for privacy, information security, etc.
 - d) Referred to existing Accessibility, Privacy, and Procurement policies
 - e) Included language related to the use of artificial intelligence detection tools

- 9) Removed the responsibility to “return to the Office of the Registrar” the equivalent letter grade component of final grade submission, and retain only a numerical grade (FHB III: A. 10.1.6.)
 - a) Communicating only a number for final grade is more in line with modern technology that communicates grades. The requirement for a letter and grade in addition to the number has been assumed to be a form of verification used for the paper-based transcription.